Uncle Johnny’s Abridged Army Unit History

[From the **27 April, 1944** edition of Hellcat News, page 5, News from Hellcat Units] The situation is tactical now for Sgt. Bobcik. The bivouac area is New Jersey. The objective was taken April 22, the climax of a successful advance. Good luck, sergeant.

Sept. 1944 Company B 43 Tank Battalion_left NY for Southampton, England_they enjoy pass in England_Then they went to LeHavre, France_In Nov they went up the Seine River_disembarked at Rouen **Nov 29**_long cold trip across France_

Action at Maginot Line_Day by day accounts of tank losses, casualties, illnesses_**Jan 1945**_They whitewash their tanks to prepare for more winter operations_

Only 11 tanks left in the battalion by **Jan 18**_They were overcome around Steinwald Woods_all the other tanks knocked out or captured_4 of those tanks remaining are in Company B_

Battalion reorganized_march continued_**Jan 25** in Strasburg area_Alsatians billeted them, very friendly and helpful_march across France continued_various personnel replacements, promotions, unit attachments_Pvt. Moe [see attachment Dec85 (pic of Moe by Uncle Johnny)], a darn good cook transferred to unit_cold_**Mar 17** passed t/ Siegfried Line where 3rd Army broke t/ some time before_medals awarded_**Mar 24** billeted in large German apt. house_gathered up lots of souveneirs even though snipers made walking the streets hazardous, esp. after dark_

Went to rear lines for maintenance, rest, get cleaned up_On the evening of **Mar 28**, w/ only 20 minutes notice, unit loaded up, and started east for the Battle of Germany_crossed the Rhine at Worms on pontoon bridge_kept going most of the night_

Encountered opposition _opposition overcome w/ help from infantry companies_tankdozer removes tree roadblock_

. . . On the morning of the **30th of March** "A" Company's lead tank was hit by a panzerfaust on the outskirts of Erbach. "B" Company then took over the lead and went to work on the town. The first thing they encountered was another effective roadblock made by blowing an overhead railroad trestle. Sgt. Bobcik's tank led 2nd platoon [See Attachment Sept85 (pic by Uncle Johnny)] up over the railroad embankment and continued into town.They had gone only about three blocks when bazookas opened up on the lead tank, firing several rounds. Tec 5 Krikorian who was driving backed his tank up with one hand while firing his tommy-gun at the jerries with the other. The crew was able to keep the enemy down with their tank gun and called for the infantry to come up and dig them out. By the time the town was cleared out their dozer tank had cleared out the roadblock, so the column moved out again. Their only casualty was Sgt Bobcik who was wounded by a sniper and evacuated.

Moved out of the town_Further fighting_tanks hit_casualties, killed and wounded_at 2300 push resumed_moving all night_colored infantry battalion flanking the tanks_at

daylight reached Amorbach, captured town_opposition mostly snipers_civilians blew up 2 bridges_further fighting, casualties_afternoon of **5th (April)** cross Pontoon bridge [? Main] River_Jerries fire at US tank and miss_tank driver, Tec 5 Parazoo saw where it was fired from and saw a jerry aiming another bazooka at the tank_he gave alarm_gunner Warrenski quickly turned his gun on the enemy_hit the bazooka with his coaxial gun, exploding it and killing the jerry. A few minutes later Capt. Livingston was hit in the shoulder by shrapnel_Lt Wolpert took over company command_by noon town cleared out_many prisoners.

Proceeded to Berheim_more fighting_**April 8th** NE to [Wern_]_only few snipers_many prisoners_cleared out town_2 hours later received artillery and mortar fire_more casualties.

The attack on Ettleben began same evening. Long remembered as the "flying wedge" formation_unit crossed open ground at top speed w/ all guns firing_advanced t/ town_encountered intense fire and casualties_at night the company w/drew because burnt buildings were outling the tanks_fired on town during the night to keep jerries from infiltrating_0300 11 German infantrymen attack unit_hit White's tank w/ a panzerfaust_Other tanks open fire and kill all German infantrymen_rest of night quiet_

Further fighting on the **9th**.

Morning, **April 30th**_Lt. Wolpert personally captured jerry Major General asleep in one of the houses_That same day unit liberates 400 Hungarian boys (8-13 yrs. old)_The jerries had them in the woods manufacturing camouflage nets_Captured jerry guards who had black German bread in their backpacks_gave bread to Hungarian boys who wolfed it down as if they were starving_

May 1, fired last shot_could see into Austria_farthest east unit went_

May 5, travelled over famous autobahn through Munich_saw infamous Dachau concentration camp_

May 8th, 1945 V.E. Day_

[The following is from HellCat newsletters]

1957_Gennaro J. Franzese, 84-35 102 Ave., Ozone Park 16, New York, manages a liquor store in Brooklyn. Has 4 children and sees John Bobcik at least once a month.

June, 1963_Gennaro Franzese (B/43) 120-52 132nd St., S. Ozone Park, N.Y.: On Sept. 2nd we had the pleasure of visiting John and Ethel Bobcik also of (B/43) who bought a beautiful new home in Fairview, N.J. John is quite a good chef and we had a wonderful barbecue dinner. All in all we had a wonderful and enjoyable day. My wife and I have 4 children. They are: Pat 17, Theresa 13, Joseph 11, and Anthony 7 years old. . . .

June 1981_John Bobcik (B/43) sent another letter in which he said he and Ben

Franzese (B/43) were making arrangements to visit Mike Torro . . .

Sept 1985 John R. Bobcik, B: "Dear Norb, Sorry I am late with my dues, but am very busy going on different trips. It just slipped my mind. I live in a retirement village in Toms River, N.J. near the ocean. I talk to Mike Torro and Ben Franzese a couple of times a month. They're both fine. Enclosed you will find a few pictures of men in Company E."